

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01

PRS-01 SS-15 IO-12 DPW-01 RSR-01 INRE-00 /083 W

----- 108589

O 190510 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1870

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

COMUSMACHTAI PAO BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HI FOR PAO IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHDC FOR ASD- PA IMMEDIATE

COMUSSAG NKP RTAFB THAI IMMEDIATE

CDR JCRC NKP RTAFB THAI IMMEDIATE

DAO PAO SAIGON SVN IMMEDIATE

CH USDEL FPJMT SAIGON SVN IMMEDIATE

USDEL JC PARIS IMMEDIATE

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E. O. 11652 N/ A

TAGS: MOPS, VN

SUBJECT: PRESS RELEASE ON FPJMT HANOI VISIT MAY 18

REF: SAIGON 8731 AND SAIGON 8379

THE FOLLOWING RELEASE WAS MADE BY EMBASSY PRESS OFFICER TO
WIRE SERVICES AT 2130 HOURS SAIGON TIME MAY 18, 1973:

BEGIN TEXT:

REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOUR- PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM RETURNED
TO HANOI TODAY TO VISIT AMERICAN GRAVESITES AND TO CONTINUE
DISCUSSIONS ON REPATRIATION OF REMAINS OF AMERICANS WHO DIED
WHILE IN CAPTIVITY. DEPARTING SAIGON AT 0615 HOURS (SAIGON TIME),
TWENTY- FIVE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FOUR- PARTY JOINT MILITARY
TEAM (THE UNITED STATES, SOUTH VIETNAM, NORTH VIETNAM AND THE
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PROVISIONAL REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT) ARRIVED AT GIA LAM AIRPORT ON A US AIR FORCE C-130 AT 0930 HOURS (SAIGON TIME). SOON AFTER ARRIVAL, THE HANOI LOCAL AUTHORITY, LTC DOAN HANH, ESCORTED THE FPJMT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BA HUYEN CEMETERY, 40 KM NORTH OF HANOI AND APPROXIMATELY 6 KM FROM BAC NINH. THIS CEMETERY, WHICH ALSO CONTAINS THOUSANDS OF FRENCH MILITARY GRAVES, LIES IN GENTLY ROLLING HILLS OVERLOOKING THE RICE PADDIES OF RURAL NORTH VIETNAM'S AGRICULTURAL BELT. THE REMAINS OF 21 OF THE 23 AMERICANS WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY ARE LOCATED IN A 20 FOOT BY 50 FOOT TRACT ON THE NORTHEAST SIDE OF THE LARGE CEMETERY. THE REMAINS HAD BEEN MOVED TO THIS CEMETERY FROM THE VAN DIEN MUNICIPAL CEMETERY NEAR HANOI WHICH FPJMT REPRESENTATIVES VISITED ON 11 MAY. TWO AMERICANS, FROM THE PARIS LIST OF TWENTY- THREE, ARE STILL BURIED AT VAN DIEN CEMETERY. WITH TODAY'S TRIP, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FPJMT HAVE VISITED THE ALLEGED GRAVESITES OF ALL 23 AMERICANS WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY IN NORTH VIETNAM, WHOSE NAMES WERE GIVEN TO THE US BY NORTH VIETNAM IN PARIS.

TO REACH THE AMERICAN GRAVESITES, THE GROUP WALKED A NARROW TRAIL FOR 800 METERS FROM THE END OF THE DIRT ROAD WHICH LEADS TO THE CEMETERY ENTRANCE. THE AMERICAN GRAVES ARE IN THREE STRAIGHT ROWS AND EACH IS MARKED BY A SMALL TOMBSTONE ABOUT TWELVE INCHES SQUARE WHICH GIVES THE INDIVIDUAL'S SIMULATED VIETNAM NAME, HIS ACTUAL INITIAL AND DATE OF DEATH.

UPON RETURNING TO THE GIA LAM AIRPORT AT 1330 HOURS (SAIGON TIME), THE DRV HOSTED LUNCH AND THEN OPENED A DISCUSSION PERIOD. USAF LTC LAWRENCE ROBSON, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE US DELEGATION, PRESENTED A DETAILED PLAN FOR THE REPATRIATION OF THE AMERICAN REMAINS. THE PLAN INCLUDES AN OFFER OF US TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN THE EXHUMATION BY SKILLED MEMORIAL ACTIVITIES SPECIALISTS AND EXPEDITIOUS TRANSFER OF THE REMAINS TO US CONTROL.

AFTER A BRIEF RECESS, THE DRV REAFFIRMED THAT THEY WILL ASSIST IN ACCOMPLISHING THE REPATRIATION ONCE THE DETAILS ARE AGREED UPON BY THE FPJMT IN SAIGON. THE US AND DRV DELEGATIONS AGREED THAT THE REPATRIATION OF THESE 23 AMERICANS WHO DIED IN CAPTIVITY WILL SERVE AS A MODEL FOR FUTURE REPATRIATION OF REMAINS THROUGHOUT NORTH VIETNAM.

LTC ROBSON REPEATED THE UNITED STATES DESIRE TO GET ON WITH THE TASK OF REPATRIATING THE AMERICAN REMAINS AND SUGGESTED THAT THIS BE THE FIRST AGENDA ITEM OF THE FPJMT MEETING SCHEDULED IN SAIGON ON 19 MAY, SINCE THE DRV DELEGATION STATED THEY WOULD NOT

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DISCUSS THE MATTER FURTHER EXCEPT AT FPJMT MEETINGS IN SAIGON. LTC NGUYEN THUC DAI, THE DRV DELEGATE TO THE FPJMT, AGREED THE DETAILED AMERICAN PLAN WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT FPJMT MEETING AS A PART OF A DISCUSSION ON HOW ARTICLE -8- B OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT WOULD BE IMPLEMENTED.

THE HANOI LOCAL AUTHORITY, LTC HANH, THANKED LTC ROBSON FOR PRESENTING THE DETAILED US PROPOSAL, ONCE AGAIN AGREED TO COOPER

ATE IN THE REPATRIATION PLAN TO BE AGREED UPON BY THE FPJMT, AND
ADJOURNED THE MEETING AT 1615 HOURS (SAIGON TIME).
THE FPJMT REPRESENTATIVES RETURNED TO SAIGON AT 2100 HOURS
(SAIGON TIME). END TEXT.
WHITEHOUSE

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CDR JCRC NKP RTAFB THAI
CINCPAC CAMP SMITH HI FOR PAO
COMUSMACHTHAI PAO BANGKOK
COMUSSAG NKP RTAFB THAI
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